



2009 Annual Report

Prepared by

Edith and Richard van der Wal

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Summary

The 2009 Annual report reflects the turtle highlights and activities of Turtugaruba, the Aruban Foundation for Sea Turtle Protection and Conservation.

The Royal decoration of Edith and Richard van der Wal and the spectacular rescue of a lost Sea Turtle caused a lot of publicity.

Island wide 154 turtle nests were registered.

The Leatherback Sea Turtle was the most frequent of the 4 nesting sea turtle species, (20 females and 123 confirmed nests).

Dos Playa in the National Park Arikok was blessed with 40 nests, illustrating the fact that these beaches are an important nesting habitat in Aruba.

The artificial lighting from many sources (resorts, street lights, cars etc.) remains a persisting threat for nesting sea turtles and a fatal threat to the little hatchlings.

For education and public awareness new activities took place, reaching out to new target groups in the community.

We are looking forward to 2010 and will count again on the active cooperation of many volunteers, departments and beachfront resorts.

Acknowledgements

All the work done in 2009 to protect the sea turtles and their habitats would not have been possible without the support of many people and organizations both on the island and abroad.

We wish to express our gratitude to WIDECAST for their scientific advice and sharing their newly developed technical material.

We want to thank our sponsors and all local support to the Sea Turtle Conservation: DOW, Police, Fire Departement, DTI, Elmar, Veterinary Services (CITES), Foundation Parke Nacional Arikok and the Staff and Security personnel of the Hotels involved in the West Coast Leatherback Project.

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Andrew, Ankie,
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Hein, Helen,
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And last but not least:
a big THANKS to all volunteers



Marijn, Marlene,
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Nelson, Olga,
Peter, Raquel,
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Susanah,
Susan, Tiiu, Yee
Ling, Yvonne,
Werner, Willem.

HIGHLIGHTS

January starts with the hatch of the last 2008 Green nest at California. Edith and Richard van der Wal leave the island in February to represent Aruba at the 29th Annual International Sea Turtle Symposium in Brisbane, Australia. They are not on the island when the Leatherback season starts, but no problem ... a group of responsible and experienced volunteers takes care of the monitoring and protection.

Back home a big surprise awaits: in conjunction with the celebration of Queen's Day, April 30, the Van der Wal couple is condecorated by the Governor of Aruba and recognized by Queen Beatrix of The Netherlands for their sea turtle work, both receiving the title of "Member Orde van Oranje Nassau"



A real honor for Edith and Richard, but even more important: the sea turtles – and nature in general – are in the picture and Aruba shows recognition for the work of all our volunteers.

And what about the sea turtles?

A remarkable event takes place in May behind the California Light House. A lost Leatherback female is spotted by an early morning cyclist, some 500 rocky meters away from the sea.



Turtle Hotline is informed immediately. Assistance is needed ... and found: Staff of the nearby Golf Course comes with a fork lift, pallet and plywood sheet. The turtle crawls onto the plywood. The Golf Course team, assisted by the just arrived Fire Brigade, moves her high and dry towards the sea and at 9.30 AM she is back in the water, safe and sound.

Besides the people on the spot also the Dutch Marines, Veterinary Department and the rangers of Parke Arikok offered their help.

It is heartwarming to notice that a lot of people really CARE. That's what it is all about!!

What is Turtugaruba?

Turtugaruba is the local foundation that protects the sea turtles in and around Aruba. The Foundation was registered in 2003 with the Chamber of Commerce (nr. S 671). General information is available on the website of WIDECAS (see :

<http://www.widecast.org/What/Country/Aruba/aruba.html>)

The 2009 Board of Turtugaruba is formed by Edith van der Wal, President, Peter Ballière, Treasurer, and Richard van der Wal, Secretary.

Turtugaruba was assisted in the field in 2009 by over 40 volunteers.

How to contact Turtugaruba?

1. Turtle Hotline

Turtugaruba is available 24 hours, 7 days a week via (+297)-5 92 93 93.

Variety of phone calls received in 2009

- reports by locals, tourists, Police, Security, Hotel Front Desks on turtle activities like tracks, nesting, hatching, stranding.
- tourists and locals who want to know where and when they can witness a sea turtle or a hatch.



- information request by a concerned citizen who wants to know if she can organize a big day-time party on Eagle Beach during the Leatherback season .
- reports of lost fresh water turtles and morocoi
- (parents of) students, asking for information in connection with school work
- report on consumption or sale of an illegal catch.

2. Email : turtugaruba@hotmail.com

Over 900 emails received in 2009, 20 % more than in 2008.

Turtugaruba sent over 350 messages. Several turtle bulletins were emailed to the volunteers.

Fieldwork and Research

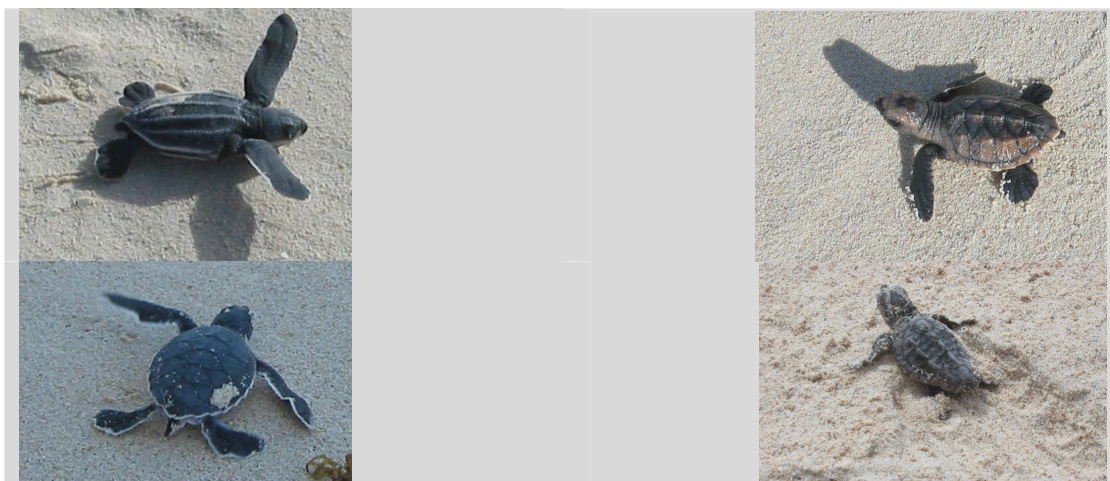
Four species of sea turtles are found nesting on Aruba:

Leatherback Sea Turtle / Driekiel (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

Loggerhead Sea Turtle / Cawama (*Caretta caretta*)

Hawksbill Sea Turtle / Caret (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)

Green Sea Turtle / Turtuga Blanco (*Chelonia mydas*)



Turtle Facts ARUBA 2009

	Leatherback	Loggerhead	Hawksbill	Green
<i>Females 2009</i>	20	2	3	4
<i>Locations 2009</i>	Low Rise Hotels Eagle Beach Palm Beach Arashi Boca Druif Wariruri Andicuri Dos Playa Gr+Ch Boca Grandi	Malmok	Baby Beach Boca Grandi Pet's Cemetery	Dos Playa Grandi Rincon Bachelors Beach Baby Beach
eggs per nest	70-90 (+ 20-30 small)	120-160	140-190	110-160
<i>2009</i>	<i>22-119</i> (+ 0-57 small)	<i>129-152</i>	<i>156-181</i>	<i>116-146</i>
nesting season	march - juli	april - august	june - october	june - october
<i>2009</i>	<i>March 24 – July 8</i>	<i>May 4 – July 6</i>	<i>June 13 – Oct 14</i>	<i>July 21 – Oct 30</i>
incubation (days)	60-70	45-55	50-60	45-55
<i>2009 (days)</i>	<i>58-74</i>	<i>51-53</i>	<i>54-57</i>	<i>47-56</i>
<i>total nests 2009</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>19</i>

*Turtle nesting activity starts at Eagle Beach with the egg laying of a Leatherback, March 24 and ends with the hatch of a Green nest at Dos Playa Grandi, December 21

*The grand total of confirmed nests of all 4 species together is 154 nests

* No nesting this year of Hawksbill Sea Turtle at Arashi and no Green nests at California or Boca Grandi

Nesting Beaches

Early morning beach patrols are a reliable part of the monitoring effort. The following 18 nesting beaches were surveyed in 2009.

beach	Latitude N	Longitude W	start	end	frequency	length
Eagle Beach	12.32.42.00	070.03.40.70	1-Mar	15-sep	daily	3
Palm Beach	12.34.26.40	070.02.45.20	1-Mar	1-aug	indication	1.2
Fishermen's Huts	12.32.07.37	070.02.45.87	1-May	1-sep	daily	0.85
Boca Catalina	12.36.14.80	070.03.05.34	1-apr	1-Oct	daily	0.05
Arashi beach	12.36.36.00	070.03.12.00	1-Mar	1-sep	daily	0.15
Arashi beach	12.36.41.0	070.03.15.00	1-jun	1-Oct	daily	0.6
Surfside	12.30.32.00	070.01.46.81	24-aug	18-nov	twice a week	0.5
California	12.37.04.13	070.02.46.66	1-jul	1-nov	twice a week	0.8
Wariruri	12.33.32.45	069.59.17.00	1-May	1-jul	weekly	0.1
Andicuri	12.32.14.69	069.57.20.72	1-May	31-jul	3 times a week	0.2
Daimari	12.31.49.62	069.56.22.61			irregular	
Dos Playa	12.30.22.26	069.55.05.58	1-jan	31-dec	daily by Park Rangers	0.25
Boca Prins	12.29.52.65	069.54.26.73	1-jan	31-dec	daily by Park Rangers	0.1
Rincon	12 27.30.91	069.52.45.27	1-sep	30-nov	3 times a week	1.2
Boca Grandi	12.26.24.52	069.52.28.56	16-apr	1-nov	daily	0.8
Bachelors' Beach	12.25.57.35	069.52.17.82	1-jul	1-nov	daily	0.15
Pets cemetery	12.24.50.94	069.52.20.99	1-jul	30-nov	daily	0.6
Baby Beach	12.24.50.76	069.52.56.43	1-sep	30-nov	daily	0.1

note : Latitude and longitude at center of the beach , length in km

Night patrols by volunteers of Turtugaruba are scheduled.

At the Eagle beach project night patrols help to observe and identify the nesting females. Later in the season night patrols can timely discover hatching in enclosed nests. When hatching at night occurs, hatchlings need protection from disorientation by artificial lights. Volunteers assist the hatchlings finding the sea by blocking confusing lights with dark screens.

On remote beaches where light pollution can seriously affect hatchlings, the nests are enclosed from sunset till dawn. These nests are inspected twice during the night to facilitate a controlled release if hatchlings emerge. According to literature the survivorship of hatchlings is significantly better if the sea can be reached before midnight, allowing the hatchlings to swim out of the coastal "predation" risks.



Projects

West Coast Leatherback Project

This is Turtugaruba's oldest and most visible project.

Leatherbacks are known to nest at Eagle Beach, the Low Rise Hotel Area and Arashi Beach. Palm Beach is part of this nesting habitat too, but light pollution and beach obstruction have reduced nesting.

Nests are protected with barricades during the whole period of incubation.



Species: **Leatherback Sea Turtle** (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

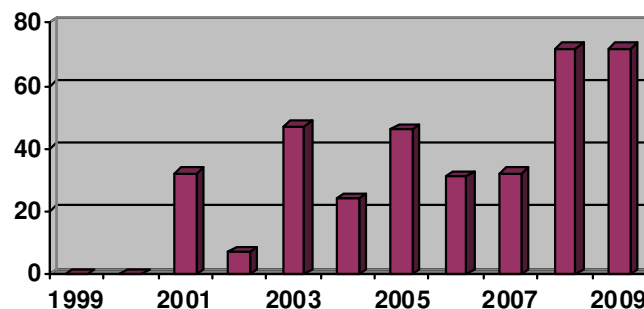
Duration of project: Monitoring started in 1993 and since 1999 an improved protocol has been applied.

Objectives:

1. Monitoring of the nesting activity and protection of the females
2. Protection of the nests in situ during incubation
3. Protection of the hatchlings during emergence from the nest and sea finding frenzy
4. Collection of data
5. Reduction of the negative effects of coastal development, especially artificial lighting on nesting females and emerging hatchlings
6. Stimulating public awareness on the spot

Results

The number of nests in 2009 is 72, equal to the 2008 season.



Eleven different females were identified of which 6 were seen in previous years.

All nests were excavated. Hatching is not always successful. 5183 yolk eggs produced 2980 hatchlings or 57.5%, which is less than in 2008 (70.9 %)

Remarkable facts

One female came ashore and was not able to lay eggs after digging the nest chamber. She had a prolaps of her cloaca. Finally she went back into the ocean, spilling just one egg in her return track. Via WIDECASST we received several suggestions on what could be done if she should try another nesting attempt. Rigorous monitoring finally revealed a leatherback track and a possible nest at Fishermen's Huts. This beach is known for loggerhead nesting but unsuitable for leatherbacks. The chaotic track with several uncovered eggs in the return path suggested that it could be from the same female. In the following weeks we witnessed her 4 more times on Eagle Beach. Every time she deposited a clutch of eggs and some separate eggs in her return track, like a signature. The prolaps diminished spontaneously but the hatching of her eggs was disappointing and less than 10 %.

Female "Hap" (Dutch for "Bite"), nicknamed for the huge indent in her left front flipper was the "Queen of eggs". This remigrant known from 2003, 2005 and 2007 laid 9 clutches and a total of 886 yolk eggs.

Another remigrant from 2007 was the most successful in terms of hatching. [9 nests, 785 eggs, 679 hatchlings (86%)].



Hap

Part of the Arashi Beach is very low, almost at sea level. Normally the nesting turtle interrupts her nest digging activity, when she feels the water. Ten false crawls were registered. Twice however the female continued her nesting. The eggs were collected before falling into the water-filled egg chamber. These two clutches were relocated successfully.

Monitoring effort

The beaches are controlled every morning at dawn March 1- July 15 and finally until the last nest has hatched.

123 times a couple of volunteers walked a two hour night patrol on the beach. Altogether it was an effort of over 500 hours and over 2000 km. Additionally many night watches took place at Arashi where 2 females produced 13 nests.

A new strategy was the commitment of several volunteers to take care of the duties on a fixed weekly night, making planning and coordination a lot easier.

Many thanks to all volunteers of this project! A special word of gratitude to Marlene, Annette (+ family) and Yvonne for their great support.

West Coast Fisherman's Huts Cawama Project

Species: **Loggerhead Sea Turtle** (*Caretta caretta*, Cawama)

Duration of project: 2001 - 2009

Period: May 3 – August 26, 2009



Results.

Five nests and 22 false crawls, made by probably two female turtles (the width of the tracks varies: the first 4 nests 80 cm, the last 6 false crawls and nest #5 a track of 70 cm wide)

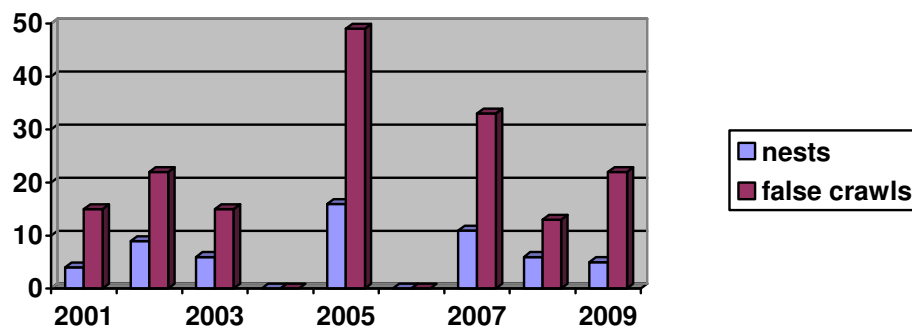
Incubation between 51 – 53 days.

The average depth (bottom) is 49.4 cm (40 – 57 cm). A total of 701 eggs was counted and 367 shells (hatch rate 52%).

The hatch rate differs a lot between separate nests:

The second nest (139 eggs) produced 132 hatchlings. Two found dead in the nest, but, 130 hatchlings alive in the ocean! Nest #3 however was not a success story: just 6 hatchlings out of a clutch of 152 eggs; the other 146 yolk eggs were partly developed. Overheating was the probable cause of embryonic death.

Loggerhead nests 2001-2009



Yvonne and Helen (and their families) spent a lot of time and energy at this project. Many thanks for a great job.

Parke Nacional Arikok

The National Park Arikok takes up 17 % of Aruba's territory.

The following beaches in the park are known for sea turtle nesting activity:

Daimari, Dos Playa Chikito, Dos Playa Grandi, Boca Prins, Boca Turtuga

This year showed nesting activity of Leatherbacks and one Green turtle.

Daily monitoring however was done only at the beaches of Dos Playa and Boca Prins.

At Daimari (June 23) one Leatherback nest and 1 Dc False Crawl was reported, but lack of regular monitoring makes this the only data for Daimari.

Project #1

Location: Dos Playa Chikito and Dos Playa Grandi

Species: **Leatherback Sea Turtle** (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

Duration of project: 2002 - 2009

Period: March 29 – Augustus 25 2009

Objectives:

1. Monitoring of the nesting activity
2. Watching the nests in situ during incubation
3. Preventing human caused threats like driving on the beach
4. Collection and registration of data

NB. This year only the number of nests, location and incubation were registered.

33 Leatherback nests were reported by the park rangers and Turtugaruba,

12 nests at Dos Playa Chikito + 21 nests at Dos Playa Grandi.

The exact location of all nests is marked by GPS waypoints + registered the conventional way (counting steps from flood mark + rocky sides of the beach and/or fixed points with crossing lines). Based on re-nesting intervals and track width (160 – 200 cm) 4 different females were nesting.

Not of all nests the hatch has been reported. Some of the nests were flooded and some safely located nests may have hatched but not noticed or not been reported.

The average incubation, based on 16 nests, was 62.4 days (58 – 67).

The nests laid after May 15 (exactly half-way through the egg laying period) hatched faster than the ones before (respectively 60.3 days versus 64.4 days).

Crab predation is heavy at the Dos Playa Beaches.



Project #2

Location: Dos Playa Grandi

Species: **Green turtle** (*Chelonia Mydas*)

Period: August 17 – December 21 2009

Objectives: see Project #1 above



Seven nests and six false crawls of just one Green female were reported. She wandered a lot, climbing dunes, looking for the best spot. But finally she chose to lay five of her nests almost on the same spot, close to the rocky wall on the parking lot side of the beach. The width of this Green's track is narrow (105 cm) compared to the tracks found at Bachelor's Beach and Rincon (120 cm).



The incubation time based on 6 nests is 50.3 days (47 – 52).

5 of the 7 nests were investigated.

Average depth (bottom) 94.4 cm (90 - 106 cm)

Average clutch: 121.2 eggs (116 -129)

Average egg shells: 113.6 (111-120)

Hatching rate: 93.7%

Based on the average clutch size of the 5 nests, this female probably produced a total of 848 eggs and 791 hatchlings.



A big “THANKS” goes to the rangers of Fundacion Parke Nacional Arikok for their monitoring effort and for keeping the beaches clean



One of the threats however, driving on the beach by 4W-drive vehicles and quad racers, has still not been eliminated from the Parke.

East Coast: Boca Grandi Leatherback project

Species: **Leatherback Sea Turtle** (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

Period: March, last week – August 15, 2009

Two Leatherback Sea turtles were active at Boca Grandi. The first nest was laid around the same date as the first Dc nest at the West Coast (March 24), but was not noticed until it hatched (June 2)! The nests were marked and “protected” with driftwood against driving by cars, an enormous threat on this beach. Another threat is formed by the lights of the nearby prison (KIA). To prevent hatchlings from going towards those lights, the nest – after an incubation of 60 days - is “closed” every night (7 PM – 6 AM) with a strip of green plastic (normally found around a flower bed); at dawn the sea side of this “fence” is opened and if the nest has hatched the small turtles are released immediately.



The two females produced a total of 13 nests (V-1= 7 nests, V-2= 6 nests).

The following data are based on 10 nests that were investigated.

The average incubation was 70.1 days (68 -74) and the bottom depth 80 cm (72 -87)

A total of 1139 eggs was counted, 667 yolk eggs (58.5 %) and 472 (41.4 %) small eggs; the amount of small eggs was very high, especially in the clutches of the second female.

Shells of all 10 clutches together: 506, that makes a 75.8 % hatch rate.

Based on the average clutch size (V-1=123.4 eggs; V-2=104.4 eggs) probably 1585 eggs were laid and out of a total of 891 yolk eggs 675 small turtles may have hatched.

A problem on the beach is pollution: marine debris from elsewhere. All kinds of plastics are found, even down in the nests.

These two hatchlings were entangled by a string, not able to emerge from the nest. They are still alive and a short time after their release they started moving and scurried towards the sea!



Besides the 13 Leatherback nests one Hawksbill nest was found this year at Boca Grandi, but the nest was flooded.

Turtugaruba's special forces (Ineke, Willem, Ankie, Olga , and Aletta) did an amazing monitoring job at Boca Grandi. In August the daily monitoring was extended to Bachelor's Beach and Tiiu took over for Aletta (back to Holland).

Boca Grandi & Bachelors Beach Green turtle project

location: Boca Grandi and Bachelor's Beach

species: **Green turtle** (*Chelonia mydas*)

period: July 21 – October 30, 2009



Results:

One Green female made a total of 5 nests, with an interval of 12 days (the first 4 nests) and 11 days. All 5 nests were located at Bachelors Beach and were investigated. Nest # 1 however only after 6 weeks and not directly after hatching, because it was located very close to nest #5.

Incubation and depth are based on all 5 nests, the other data are based on the last 4 nests.

Incubation: 55.2 days (54 -56); Nest depth (bottom) average: 83 cm (72 – 92)

Average clutch size: 139.8 eggs (136 -146) and 129 shells (121 -137). Hatch rate: 92%

Based on the average clutch size this female probably laid a total of 699 eggs and produced 645 hatchlings.



The lights of the prison are very "attractive"

The nests are protected in situ by driftwood + green plastic strip at night when incubation is completed (see Boca Grandi).

Unfortunately not all hatchlings made it into the sea. The very first nest went the wrong way: a lot of little tracks going in the direction of the KIA (prison). How were the hatchlings able to escape??? A crab dug a hole just inside the ring. The sand that came out of this hole probably enabled the hatchlings to cross the enclosure and escape.

At Boca Grandi there were no green turtle nests in 2009.

During the season the Rincon area (a rocky coast 2 miles north of Boca Grandi) was added 3 times a week to the monitoring efforts. Five Green turtle nests, probably all of the same female were found.

South East Coast

location: Baby Beach and Pet's cemetery

species: **Green turtle** (*Chelonia mydas*), **Hawksbill turtle** (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)

period: August 13 – end of November 2009.

Baby Beach



One Green nest was reported from the southern part of the island at Baby Beach behind the Nanki Club.

This spot is better known for Hawksbill activity. In September two Hawksbill false crawls (60 cm) were reported and 15 days later one nest (with same track width).

At the Pet's cemetery area there was no sign of Green turtle activity. One Hawksbill was active however (9 false crawls, 4 nests confirmed). Three nests were investigated. Results: incubation 55.3 days (54 – 57), average depth (bottom) 56.6 cm (51 -63). The three nests together contained 507 eggs and 386 shells (76% hatch rate); 75 % of the hatchlings emerged alive, but not all reached the sea because of disorientation by the light glow of the refinery.

Hawksbill track at Pets Cemetery Beach



Strandings

Reports of stranded Sea Turtles are rare on Aruba.

*February, 19. Agapito, ranger of Parke Arikok finds a dead sea turtle (20 cm) and some days later another one. The strandings have been reported to the Cites Authority.

*October, 7. A hawksbill sea turtle (6 cm CCL) is found at Wariruri by body boarders.



The small animal does not succeed to swim away. Turtugaruba picks it up and releases the hawksbill at Malmok, at the sheltered west side of the island. The turtle swims away staying just below the surface (like a big hatchling).



In-water report

Like in previous years, Matt Boland keeps us informed about his in-water observations. Fibropapillomatosis is observed as in previous years; although this turtle is encountered resting exactly at the same spot as “Fibro”, it seems to be a new turtle. The retro orbital scale pattern can be helpful to identify and recognize individual green turtles on pictures.



Pictures by Matt Boland

Turtugaruba as “Public Accuser”

Quite often the eyes of Turtugaruba observe an negative environmental situation that needs to be solved, but who is in charge???? If Turtugaruba is not able to solve the problem, it reports to CZM or Ahata Environmental Committee.

Some examples:

A big number of trash bags, the result of a beach clean-up, is left behind in the California Dunes; they have not been picked up for months, gathering more and more trash. And not only ocean debris!!!



Completely on the other side of the island a problem exists, which is getting worse every year. The Pet's Cemetery (Santana di Cacho) is a nesting habitat for Green and Hawksbill Sea Turtles. The number of pets' graves is increasing dramatically, obstructing the turtles to nest, or forcing them to lay their eggs inbetween dead bodies.



Another human impact: Arashi beach was upgraded this year (new parking lot, retainer wall and more palapas). After the construction period the beach was not cleaned properly. One Leatherback “nest” (tracks reported at 6.00 AM) did not produce hatchlings. Long after due date investigation showed that the reason for this failure was human negligence. The nest turned out to be a false crawl: a huge piece of lumber from a demolished beach hut was left behind under the sand, making proper nesting impossible.



Beach Clean-ups

Many of the Turtugaruba volunteers take along a trash bag (daily) while monitoring the nesting beach at day break. Besides, Turtugaruba participates in the 16th Aruba Reef Care Project, organized by Castro Perez, ATA. (July 4-5)



November, 14 the 8th National Coastal Clean Up, organized by AHATA takes place.



Members of the Environmental Committee guide school children and together with volunteers of their own hotel or foundation a lot of beaches all around Aruba are cleaned by the old and the young. Turtugaruba joins the St Francisus School and in one morning Bachelor's Beach is completely clean!!



Public Awareness and Education

Media:

Press releases : Turtugaruba interacts with the local Press, sending press releases to all the local papers (Papiamentu, English, Dutch) at special events (e.g. start and end of the Leatherback Season, hatching of a nest, rescue of a lost Leatherback).

Interviews that resulted in an article in: “Aruba Nights 2009”, “House Complete, August 2009”, “All at Sea, September 2009”.

Interview with “Hof van Heden” contributing to a TV series about the six Dutch Caribbean Islands.

Interview with Tatiana Quinchanegua from Colombia for an article in “El Tiempo”.

Article in “Pan Dushi”, (winter 2009) by Jonnie Tilma.

An advert with the hotline number 5929393 and the request to report turtle - or track sightings can be found daily in the newspaper “Amigoe di Aruba”.

Public Awareness



Aruba Turtle fun run/walk, organized by University of Aruba, Faculty for Hospitality and Tourism Management Studies.

The FHTMS students of Mrs. Thais Nierop organized the run. Before the start the participants were given brief information about Sea Turtles. The well organized run turned out to be a nice fundraiser. Turtugaruba received new signs for the nests in 2010 and an enormous donation.

Beyesa Social

Priscilla Lee, candidate for Miss Aruba 2009 and FHTMS student, chooses to present the Turtugaruba Foundation during the “Beyesa Social”, a part of the Miss Aruba Election. Her well-prepared speech made impact and was an eye-opener for the audience.



Priscilla Lee,
Miss Aruba 2009

Education

Power Point Presentation

Primary Schools: Kukwisa, Colegio Conrado Coronel, Colegio San José, Emmaschool

Secondary Schools: Filomena Mavo (Ciclo Basico 2), International School of Aruba

University of Aruba, Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism,

Bucuti Beach Resort.

CEDE Aruba Project Continued

As a result of the Cede Aruba training sessions of previous years, Turtugaruba develops a “booklet project”. The project will be sponsored by Cede Aruba.

The first step is to design a booklet with information, complimentary to the nature & science class about the Leatherback season at Eagle Beach. It will be distributed at the Secondary Schools of Aruba. All students of Ciclo Basico 2 will receive this booklet, handed out during a short lecture at school.

In 2009 the booklet was prepared and designed and contacts have been made with Secondary Schools to start the distribution in 2010.

“Spreekbeurt” or papers assistance

Free info + material is given year-round at Constantijn Huygensstraat 8, Oranjestad, in combination with a personal explanation about the sea turtles.

This year just 4 children (grade 3 and 5) from 2 different Primary Schools visited Turtugaruba, accompanied by a parent or aunt.

Also two students from IPA (Teacher College) are interested.

On request information was sent by email to students abroad (USA, Holland)

IPA Social Project

Two students of IPA (Teacher College) are preparing their “Social Project” guided by Turtugaruba. They will investigate the need for educational material, especially for children aged 4-8 years. If necessary, they will develop new material.

Increase of awareness

A very important part of the promotion of awareness and education takes place “on the spot”, when local people and/or tourists witness a nesting female or the wonder of a hatching.

The explanation of the volunteers of Turtugaruba is highly appreciated.

“This really makes my vacation” is often heard.



And the efforts to “educate” people about sea turtle protection work!

When witnessing a hatch, locals (especially schoolchildren) and “repeat-guest” tourists are spreading the story:

<NO FLASH>, <NO TRASH>, <STAY BEHIND>, <DO NOT TOUCH>.....<ENJOY>.....!!!

More and more people feel responsible for the sea turtles and their nests. Sometimes small children, not supervised by adults, can mistake a nest protected by barricades for a special playground. One afternoon at Eagle Beach volunteers notice - from a distance- a small girl playing in the center of the nesting site. Before they reach the kid, a car stops at the Boulevard, close to the nest. A young woman (not the mother!) descends, goes to the nest and explains to the child that she is not supposed to play there!

Partners

Governmental Departments:

DOW (Department of Public Works)

Every year the support of DOW is very essential for the protection of the sea turtles, especially on the West Coast. This year Turtugaruba used 227 barriers and 415 iron stands from the beginning of March till the end of September at the West Coast. The first week of July an extra 30 barricades + 60 stands were placed at Boca Grandi to protect the nests during Aruba Hiwinds and the Annual Coastal Clean-Up. DOW is an abbreviation of Dienst Openbare Werken (=Department of Public Works), but, as a tourist suggested, “**Department Of Wildlife**” fits very well too!

CZM (Coastal Zone Management)

In the year 2009 Aruba still has no Marine Park!!

Turtugaruba is present at the Blue Flag meeting (March 11).

In 2006 CZM promised to upgrade 3 beaches: Arashi, Baby Beach and Mangel Halto (the first two are turtle nesting sites). This year those beaches have had special attention of Coastal Zone Management and AHATA in order to obtain the Blue Flag qualification (still pending). Let's hope it will be for the best of the turtles too.

POLICE Santa Cruz and San Nicolas

When issuing camping permits for the beach during the Easter Holidays, the Police hands out the Turtugaruba Campamento Flyer at the same time. Thanks!

DTI , ELMAR and POLICE Noord

They were very helpful again this year switching off the street lights to ensure a dark environment for the Loggerhead Sea Turtles at Malmok and also during the Leatherback and Hawksbill season at Arashi.

CITES Authority (Veterinary Services, Barcadera)

Evidence and/or suspicion of infringement of the laws that protect sea turtles are always reported to the Cites Authority.

Catch of sea turtles and sale of turtle meat.

-January, 13. Edith is invited by Olinda Rasmijn (Stimaruba) to visit a senior citizen, who tells us that she bought turtle meat, without knowing it is illegal .

-July , 3. By telephone it is reported that on a regular basis turtles are caught at Mangel Halto and Santo Largo and the meat is sold at Rey Hing Supermarket, Pos Chikito. The Cites Authority will investigate this case.

The Buccaneer Restaurant displays sea turtles in its aquarium. Turtugaruba already reported this to the Cites Authority in 2006, but it seemed to be legal, based on a personal permission issued in the past. The restaurant owner has passed away. The Cites Authority is working with the new owner to solve this issue according to the current laws.(i.e. release of the turtles without replacement).

Debriefing Workshop Stranded Animals Curacao (October 12). AMMF will keep us informed.

Local NGO's

Contact with:

Wild Aruba, at the presentation of the official Report (January 21)

Stimaruba.

AMMF about a stranded Dolphin at California.

Parke Nacional Arikok. Turtugaruba was invited at the opening of the Visitors Center at Parke Arikok and met with Her Highness Princess Margriet of the Netherlands and her husband, Prof. Mr. Pieter van Vollenhoven. Both took a great interest in hearing about the sea turtles. A lot of royal attention this year!

Turtugaruba was also present at the Symposium (October 27) about the future of the park.

Fundacion Salba Nos Burico.

Hotel Sector

In 2009 Turtugaruba continued to be an active member of the AHATA Environmental Committee, being present during the monthly meetings and supporting various actions (e.g. Competencia di Obra i Arte recicla; Coastal Clean Up, info for Kids Fest Ling & Sons).

Turtugaruba attended the opening of Oceania Resort Residences Phase II.

Let's hope the Resort will be as conscious of possible light pollution as before.

Turtugaruba has provided most of the Beach Hotels with a poster and the Turtle Hotline information. All hotels promised to pay attention and put the poster on a spot visible for tourists and staff.

This year Leatherback sea turtles were active in front of :

Tamarijn, Divi Divi, ABC, Manchebo, Bucuti & Tara building, Costa Linda, Le Dome, La Quinta, Oceania, MVC, Paradise Beach Villas, La Cabana, Amsterdam Manor, Riu and Playa Linda.



This year, as for many years now, **Costa Linda** allowed us to use part of their premises to have the DOW barricades in stock during the season.

The cooperation in keeping the beach as dark as possible was good this year and the assistance of the Security very pleasant.

Bucuti Beach Resort sponsored another part of the retainer wall at Fisherman's Huts. The staff of this resort is well informed about the sea turtles; they are always willing to learn more about sea turtles and organize presentations for both staff and guests.

International Contacts

WIDECAST www.widecast.org

Turtugaruba is proud to be a member of WIDECAST (Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network).

Widecast has been a partner organization for the Caribbean Environment Programme of the United Nations (UNEP) since the early 1980s. Internationally Widecast is considered a unique regional entity of worldwide importance. At the end of 2009 Widecast produced a Technical Report of high interest for Beach Resorts. This “Manual of Best Practices for Safeguarding Sea Turtle Nesting Beaches” will be introduced in Aruba at the beginning of the sea turtle season 2010.

WIDECAST Country Coordinators for Aruba are Edith and Richard van der Wal.

SWOT (State of the World’s Sea Turtles)

SWOT is a partnership among Conservation International (CI), the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist group (MTSG), Duke University’s OBIS-SEAMAP and an ever-growing international team of local organizations, scientists and conservationists. This group – the SWOT team - is working together to protect sea turtles and their habitats worldwide. Part of the strength is pooling and synthesizing data. Turtugaruba also contributes the local sea turtle facts. Each year – since 2006 - a SWOT Report has been published, including a lot of educational and recent turtle stories and facts. The reports can be viewed at: <http://seaturtlestatus.org/report>

IUCN SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group.

Besides the link with Widecast, the international contacts of Turtugaruba are guaranteed by Edith and Richard van der Wal, who are members of the IUCN SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group.

Turtugaruba attended :



**29th Symposium on Sea Turtle
Biology and Conservation**
17-19th February 2009 Brisbane, Australia



and presented a Poster “**Ten years survey of leatherback nesting on Aruba 1999-2008**”.

Sea Turtle Conservation Bonaire (STCB)

In June STCB requested us to join them to go on the air by distributing a series of educational radio announcements to inform the public about sea turtles and their conservation. STCB developed seven messages. The idea was nice. Some messages could have been more suitable for the Aruban sea turtle situation. Richard made an effort to go to Radio Stations to get the job done, but it was not a success in Aruba.

Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA)

In August Turtugaruba received a request to report data of all turtles that hatched on Aruban beaches in 2008. DCNA needed the information for the Dutch Postcode Lotterij, one of their main sponsors.

Sponsors

Amigoe, year round free advertising

Aruba Blue Pages, free advertising

Vestas Benelux NV at the Ground Breaking of the windmill park at Vader Piet)

La Linda and Texas Furniture Store (material for screens)

Bucuti Beach Resort and Tara Suites (retainer wall)

De Wit Stores

University of Aruba, FHTMS

CEDE Aruba, first part of Booklet project

Colegio San José : a mug filled with small change donated by young schoolchildren after a Power Point Presentation

Donations also from individuals, ranging from small pocket money on the beach (“in stead of buying myself a beer”) to a substantial check from repeated guests.

To all of you: **Thank you so much!!!**

